03500.017945

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:	)	
	:	Examiner: Patrick H. Mackey
TOMOKAZU NAKAMURA ET AL.	)	
	:	Group Art Unit: 3651
Application No.: 10/790,001	)	
	:	Confirmation No. 3580
Filed: March 2, 2004	)	
	:	
For: SHEET PROCESSING APPARATUS WITH BUFFER FOR SHEET FINISHER	)	March 1, 2006
	:	

Mail Stop Amendment
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SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS

Sir:

On February 14, 2006, Applicants filed an Information Disclosure Statement in which Japanese Patent Document 2003-81517 was filed, together with its translation. Applicants have had an opportunity to further review the cited reference and respectfully submit these additional comments thereon.

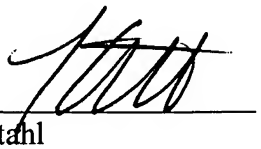
Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 2003-81517 (hereinafter the '517 application) provides that the sheet which is held by the conveying guide 23 is laid in the wait state and the sheet stack which is stacked on the post-processing tray 25 via the rollers 24f and 24g is conveyed in the direction of the stack tray 26 by the finisher 19 at the same time.

However, the finisher 19 of the '517 application is not provided with the second sheet conveying means as in the present invention. Therefore, the positional relationship between tray 25 and the conveying guide 23 for conveying the sheet between rollers 24f and 24g in a condition that the leading end of the sheet stacked on the post-processing tray 25 is in advance of and protrudes from the leading end of the sheet waiting in the conveying guide 23 by a predetermined amount should be set in advance.

In contrast, the sheet processing apparatus of the present invention is provided with the second sheet conveying means for conveying the sheet stacked on the first sheet stacking means towards the second sheet stacking means. Thus, the leading end of the sheet stack stacked on the first sheet stacking means can always protrude by a predetermined amount from the leading end of the sheet waiting on the sheet holding means, regardless of the positional relationship between the sheet holding means and the first sheet stacking means. In the present invention, such a prescribed positional relationship between the sheets can be always attained, and therefore design flexibility for the sheet processing apparatus can be increased and good performance for sheet discharging and stacking is more likely.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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